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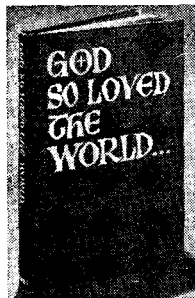
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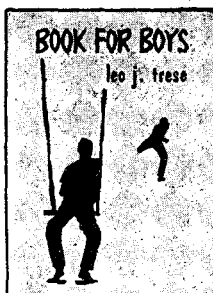
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THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

Intermission in India

"END FIRST ACT, no curtain" must be the stage direction following the sudden and surprising cease-fire in Communist China's latest massive assault on India's Himalayan frontiers. Whether it is a one-act drama or the first act in a long series of contests remains to be seen. At any rate the present intermission has left a world audience stunned by the character changes so far revealed and in mystery as to the motives of the antagonist.

The paradox-monger has certainly not gone hungry during the Sino-Indian border clash. For the spectacle of a neutralist and pacifist India enthusiastically preparing for an all-out war against "friendly" Red China was only to be matched by "pro-Western" Pakistan's retreat toward neutralism, marked by Foreign Minister Mohammed Ali's agonized declaration of disillusionment. Mao's "Fire and fall back!" order, however, must have sent even paradox-mongers begging for consistency.

Actually, there should be no great puzzlement about China's temporary cease-fire. She has gained the three things which plainly seem to have been her objective. For, first, she has consolidated her hold in Ladakh, where she had built a vital high-way connecting Sinkiang Province with Tibet. Second, she has impressed Southeast Asia with her military superiority over India, while, incidentally, showing Russia that she can act as an independent Communist power. Third, she has diverted attention away from her own embarrassing domestic failures. The threat of massive Western aid, the risk of forcing Soviet Russia to give decisive support to India and the strategic disadvantage of fighting a war in the Himalayan winter all conspire to make China's cease-fire quite intelligible.

Yet it is true that the Chinese were within a hundred miles of the oil- and tea-rich Assam Plains in India's northeast and within moments of capturing the vital Chusul airfield in the northwest, when the

cease-fire order came. These facts, together with the fact that China has offered to withdraw, starting December 1, to the border which India accepts in the Northeast Frontier, while holding to the one which India does not accept in the northwest, make it almost imperative to be skeptical about the present lull in actual fighting. In its present form, the Chinese proposal is "unacceptable" to India and she is "weighing" her reply to the Chinese government. While asking for a "clarification" of China's terms, India is taking advantage of the cease-fire to rally her forces and prepare for further fighting. In view of the imponderables in the present situation, this is simply the most realistic course for India.

NO ONE wants to see a continuation of this war in the Far East. It has already been the occasion of terrible bloodshed and grief. Any prolonged confrontation between Chinese and Indian troops is, moreover, almost certain to involve the whole of Southeast Asia and, indeed, imperil the world. As India's chief representative to the United Nations, B. N. Chakravarty, pointed out, there are other countries, besides India, whose territory shows up inside Chinese borders on Chinese maps.

It is all the more unfortunate, then, that Pakistan should have given way to panic at such a critical time. If one good result could have emerged from the Chinese-Indian conflict, it could have been a settlement of India's dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir. Pakistan would in fact have much more to gain by a non-aggression pact with India than it would have in concluding one with Communist China. The fact that Pakistan is now considering such a pact with China must be counted an ominous one. While India's failure to take the initiative in settling the Kashmir dispute must also be scored, it is still not too late for her to settle with Pakistan.

In the meantime, the effect of China's naked power-grab in India can be expected to penetrate among the non-aligned nations of Southeast Asia

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and Africa. There will always be a certain number of those who will simply want to be on the side of the more powerful. Yet the impression made on most of these nations by China's aggression cannot but be adverse.

At the same time, it is possible that China will not attempt a further *putsch* into India before next spring. Since India cannot accept the Chinese terms of withdrawal on the Northwest Frontier, it may also be that we shall witness a stalemate in the situation at least until that time. That is, of course, all the more reason for India to press on with its mobilization and for United States and other Western military aid to continue to pour into India, in order that India's bargaining position will be strengthened by the spring. Now is also the most important time for the United States to reconsider her aims and policies in Southeast Asia and to make a concerted bid for the sympathy and support of those fearfully intimidated peoples.

Chilean-American Copper

THE ALLIANCE for Progress confronts a Latin America rich in undeveloped natural resources. Many countries are overly dependent on exports of one or two raw materials. Transportation is inadequate, poverty general, economic growth unable to keep up with the increase in population, government incapable, currency unstable, illiteracy and disease widespread. The contrast in living standards between the wealthy few and the destitute masses defies description. And the peoples of the other Americas feel envy and antipathy toward the United States.

The copper situation in Chile provides a good illustration. Two United States companies (Anaconda and Kennecott-owned Braden) account for three-fifths of Chile's foreign exchange earnings and claim to pay fifteen per cent of all the taxes collected. Their workers receive the highest wages in Chile. Much of the copper is shipped to Europe and the United States for refining. There are enough proven Chilean copper reserves to last for sixty years, and the expansion of its copper industry is considered the keystone of Chile's ten-year development program.

Accordingly, the two companies drew up a three hundred million dollar expansion program. It included new mines and smelting-refining facilities and the transfer of thousands of workers from antiquated company towns in desert areas as much as nine thousand feet above sea level to more healthful, fertile valleys. The Braden Company alone planned to double its production within ten years.

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THE COMMONWEAL

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At first the government seemed favorable to this plan, which involved a promise that present tax laws would be stabilized for twenty years. But the Chilean Congress refused even to consider it.

Members of the powerful Socialist-Communist bloc call the companies leading "agents of Yankee imperialism." Conservatives, at the other extreme of the Congress spectrum, are hardly less anti-American in their resentment of Alliance objectives of tax and land reforms. There is continuous agitation for greater control over the companies or nationalization. The Christian Democrats call for "Chileanization" of the mines, or the establishment of an agency to control all sales of copper produced.

Since the companies' proposal has fallen through, Anaconda and Kennecott seek new sources of copper within the United States and Canada. Chile, for its part, continues to envisage expansion perhaps through resort to European capital and technicians for new mines. Stagnation is in prospect. If the Chilean government would recognize its own limitations and the capabilities of the companies while the latter realize that their days of economic domination are numbered, perhaps a way could be found to revive the companies' plan on a joint transitional basis.

The Debate on Revelation

IF NOTHING else, the recent and very heated debate over the draft proposal on "The Sources of Revelation" has revealed some deep and important cleavages among the bishops at the Council. From the first, of course, it was known that differences existed among the bishops. But there was some uncertainty whether these differences would take the form of direct and open clashes.

In actuality, there should be no great surprise at this turn of events. It appears obvious that the Council fathers, far more than the Catholic world in general, saw in the doctrinal problem of the sources of revelation a vital and central problem, one well worth struggling over. The fact that Pope John suspended the debate and appointed a special commission to re-write the draft proposal underscores its importance.

Yet there may well be some doubt that the significance of this issue has been properly understood. Many reports of the debate have stressed that the conflict is one between those who believe the Council ought to concern itself with pastoral matters and those who believe that, in the face of dangerous tendencies among some theologians, the Council should reaffirm traditional doctrines. Still other reports have stressed that many bishops want to avoid

formulating any decrees which would serve to dim the prospects of Christian unity or understanding. Undoubtedly, there is a considerable degree of truth in these reports.

The real issues, however, appear to lie at a deeper level. They lie, first of all, in the way the Church should respond to the ecumenical quest. Ought the Church to stress those doctrines which most offend Protestants and Orthodox? Put another way, ought the Church to attempt to fix once and for all those doctrines most at variance with Protestant and Orthodox theology? Or, on the contrary, ought the Church make every effort to refine its theology in such a way that it remains open to at least the possibility of some modes of reconciliation with non-Catholic Christian thought? In essence, ought the Church to do its thinking in the context of ecumenism or only in the context of its own needs, rights and customs?

The second issue concerns the problem of the development of doctrine. In particular, it concerns the way in which the Church ought to approach its past theological formulations. Ought the Church to see its task as one of reiterating and reasserting without change its past formulations or as one of weighing, judging and refining them in the light of the living tradition of the Church and the discoveries of contemporary theological research?

The debate on the sources of revelation has raised this question in a very direct way. Is the Church committed to the purported teaching of the Council of Trent that there are two distinct sources of revelation: Scripture and Tradition? Or is it possible, as many theologians argue, that Trent did not decide this matter decisively and that it is still possible for the Church to teach that Scripture and Tradition are really two aspects of one revelation? And to teach, moreover, that the Bible contains, at least implicitly, the whole of revelation? The way the Church answers these questions could be of decisive importance—for the future of Catholic theology no less than for the future of Catholic-Protestant relations.

These two issues lie at the very heart of the debate over the sources of revelation. They involve, finally, the Church's understanding of its own nature. Is the Church's task that of preserving inviolate the deposit of faith, neither adding to nor subtracting from that deposit? The answer of course is that it is; this must forever remain the great duty of the Church. But does this necessarily mean that the Church must remain equally attached to its past understanding and doctrinal explanation of this deposit? That is the ultimate question the debate has posed for the Church. That it remains an open question seems obvious.

Busting the Block

BOTH the city and the state of New York have in recent weeks been devoting official attention to the subject of blockbusting. The findings add up to a sad story, of concern in many places besides New York.

Blockbusting feeds on fear. The technique is simplicity itself. First an unscrupulous real estate operator calls white homeowners and "warns" them that a Negro family is moving onto the block. Sometimes he hires Negroes to walk up and down the street, or ride through slowly in cars. Then the operator calls on the owners, offering a fast deal on a cash basis. All too often white owners do panic and sell out fast. Then the operator turns around and sells the house to Negroes.

Often the white owner takes a beating on the price, selling for far less than the current value. Other times he may get a fair price. Either way, the blockbuster reaps profits which may amount to almost one hundred per cent in a few months' time. The way he does it, of course, is by selling to Negro families at exorbitant prices, in many cases charging them almost twice the going price.

One case cited in hearings by the N.Y. Human Rights Commission illustrates the financial end of blockbusting very nicely. On the house in question the fair market price was figured at slightly under ten thousand dollars. The real estate operator paid the white family slightly over twelve thousand. He then was able to sell the house immediately to a Negro family for twenty-one thousand dollars—a profitable if unsavory deal.

For the white family involved, such a panic-inspired sale is often a tragedy. Many times the seller receives less than fair value; very seldom does he receive enough to balance the purchase price of a new home in an inflated housing market. Very often selling the house means tearing up neighborhood roots that existed for many years. The white seller ends up embittered by his whole experience, and he tends to direct his anger at Negroes in general and at the Negro family which bought his house in particular.

Why, then, does the white homeowner sell? His fear may be irrational and sometimes even pathological, but it is real nonetheless. He identifies Negroes with the conditions under which they so often are forced to live. No sane person wants to raise his children in an area with a high crime and delinquency rate, yet these are the conditions he associates with Negroes—all Negroes. Confronted with what he sees as a threat of such conditions in his own neighborhood, all he can think of is to get out, and get out fast. And given the rate at which Northern cities are changing these days, the homeowner may repeat this process several times in his lifetime, unless he can afford to move to a still all-white suburb.

In a blockbusting situation, the Negro family fares little better than the white. Having to pay roughly twice as much as the fair market price on the house, the Negro buyer normally has to carry a crushing second mortgage. In the case previously cited, the Negro purchaser had to carry a monthly mortgage payment of about \$250. Unless his income is unusually high, the only way a Negro buyer can pay such a sum is by sub-letting part of the house. This means double or even triple occupancy in a one-family house. Duplicate this situation in other houses as the blockbusters proceed, and the new area is soon as overcrowded as the one the Negro buyers were fleeing from in the first place.

When the blockbusters succeed in their plans, the net result is not only a deteriorated neighborhood: it is also, almost always, an all-Negro neighborhood. Blockbusting does not achieve integration; all it does is change the boundaries of segregated neighborhoods. It extends the area of housing available to Negroes a very little bit, at great cost in human suffering and human relations.

If a white owner sells out of fear, what motivates the Negro buyer? Usually, of course, he is not aware of the fact that he is being used by blockbusters. Although he knows the neighborhood is white, he hopes that this time the residents will not panic just because a Negro family moves in and that integration rather than an all-Negro neighborhood will be the result. In any case, the sad fact is that for very many Negroes almost any change is likely to seem like a change for the better. Thus the Negro too is victim rather than villain in the case.

Prompt action is essential when a neighborhood is threatened by blockbusters. What the residents should do, of course, is to join together and stand firm. Few white people want to be "alone" in a Negro neighborhood, but there is really no reason for panic if one or two Negro families buy on a block. The tragedy is that fear causes people to behave hastily and often irrationally, and thus help to bring about precisely the situation that neither white nor Negro really wants—another segregated all-Negro neighborhood.

If panic is not to take over a racially changing neighborhood, whites and Negroes have to work together in a planned and rational fashion. This is never easy, it must be said, but it can be done and it has been managed in various localities and in various cities. It could certainly be done easier and more often if city and state officials would crack down hard on real estate operators who specialize in blockbusting. Of all the "respectable" ways to make a dollar in our society, blockbusting is one of the lowest.

JAMES O'GARA

The Legacy of St. Teresa

AMALIA ELGUERA

ST. TERESA of Avila is her own great literary creation. The fact deserves to be emphasized on the four hundredth anniversary of her earliest and decisive book, her *Life* or autobiography, the first version of which she completed in June, 1562.

St. Teresa's hold on the layman's attention strengthens according to awareness of this paradox: that the passionate contemplative who emerges from the *Life*, the major *Relations* and the treatises is the self-portrait of a writer shrewdly cautious and very loyal to earthly (as distinct from worldly) life. She gives us Martha's assessment of Mary, so to speak, and the account of the conflict between them, as well as Mary's dialogue with the Christ. Hence it is that she defeats all her translators: her dignity may be recaptured but never her forthrightness, her bare Castilian language rich with inflections of the now pleading, now wondering, now objecting, now confiding human voice.

She remains our problematic chief authority on herself; the unrivaled master of contemplative practice, though St. John of the Cross be the master of its theory. The metaphysical deposit of her thought is small. Admittedly, no less a metaphysician than Leibniz was influenced by her conception that the soul should live "as if nothing but itself and God existed"; but it was an inherited conception, and Leibniz could have borrowed it from treatises much older than *The Interior Castle*, such as the celebrated *De adhaerendo Deo*, attributed to St. Albert the Great.

All ascetic and mystical theology is of course derivative; but St. Teresa's perhaps more so than most, due partly to her Castilian brand of orthodoxy, partly to her practical sense. St. Teresa did not consider it her intellectual business to "discover" more about God; her business was to reflect on how a more direct relation might be achieved between man as we discover him to be through experience, and God as we know Him through the Bible and the Church. What renders her so sagacious a psychologist—and therefore, incidentally, the most profitably readable of the mystics for the layman—is her refusal to single out any one type of experience, including the mystical, as more likely to bring

about that relation than any other; for to do so, as she realized, would be to transfer all initiative from God to man.

Her famous rebuke of St. John of the Cross has therefore more than anecdotal interest: "God deliver me from people so spiritual that they want to turn everything into perfect contemplation." That is Martha brusquely putting Mary in her place; but, in the particular circumstances, for the right reason.

It was excessive of St. John to interpret the words, "Seek thyself in Me" as a summons to absolute renunciation; though one must in fairness add that he was twenty-seven years St. Teresa's junior. "It would be a sorry state of affairs," St. Teresa wrote to the Bishop of Avila, "if we could not seek God unless we were dead to the world. Neither the Magdalene nor the Samaritan woman nor the woman of Cana were dead to the world when they found Him."

THE MEASURE of Mary in St. Teresa may not altogether fulfill one of the two New Testament prototypes to our rational satisfaction—who could?—but her Martha far surpasses the other. For she was Martha enriched by a golden streak of Candide.

To save one's soul was for St. Teresa par excellence to cultivate one's garden, and by a memorable coincidence, she did in fact describe the four degrees of prayer as "the four ways of watering the garden." The delights to be sought and found in contemplation, the peerless "gustation of God," to quote from Sir Thomas Browne, enthralled her as much as any other mystic; but the awareness never left her that what we have been commanded to work out is salvation, not superlative experience. Significantly, the French quietists, those connoisseurs of prayer, regarded her as rather a spoilsport in the *salon* of the chosen few.

Why, complains a quietist speaker in *Dialogues* attributed to La Bruyère, why does St. Teresa lay such emphasis on suffering and tribulation? Presumably this is as disconcerting as if a *gourmet* talked of famine and indigestion all the time. But consider briefly the hard facts of her development, all of which incidentally, belong to the first version of her life.

There is something tragic about St. Teresa's obsession with the dialogue between Christ and the Samari-

AMALIA ELGUERA is a South American scholar and translator now living in London. She is now in the process of preparing a new translation of St. Teresa's *Life*.

tan woman by the well: "Lord, give me living water:" she had made that same request and been given a heady wine instead. Her sensibility could cope with the mercy, but not—for twenty years at least—her mind; for St. Teresa's, being a profound mind subject to primary theology, required great master-concepts in order to perform great tasks.

She took up the life of prayer under the spell of the mystical theology of the Franciscan monk, Osuna. It was a noble but chiefly devotional theology which, though it stirred her emotions, failed to release her intellect. Had not her savage conflict ensued, it could not be said of her today, as Simone de Beauvoir so perceptively says in *The Second Sex*, that St. Teresa differs decisively from other women mystics in that they sought satisfaction of their femininity whereas she sought it of her humanity.

UNAMUNO once described St. Teresa at Becedas, the village high in Old Castile where she was taken to convalesce after illness overtook her during her second year in the convent: a bewildered nun of twenty-three, scanning with equal anguish, now the pages of her breviary, now the distant snow-capped peaks. It is a telling description.

The potential sweep of St. Teresa's mind far exceeded the range of the then available monastic life. In consequence, she was to develop into founder of Carmelite mysticism and reformer of the Carmelite Order. It was in the second capacity that she discovered the young Friar John of St. Matthias at Medina del Campo and dissuaded him from joining the Cistercians, thus securing the future St. John of the Cross for Carmel.

St. Teresa sensed even in her original confusion that the gate is strait but not so the cast of mind that finds it. When, in her full maturity, she had a flash-back revelation of "the place that was nearly mine in hell," what she experienced was an obscene narrowness devouring and constraining her. In the nineteenth century, Father Bouix, translating the *Life* into French, nervously toned down that passage; but Gerard Manley Hopkins used to ponder on its terrible precision.

She was unforgettably right in specifying that she seemed to wage a hopeless struggle, because she struggled fundamentally against temptations insubstantial; that she was threatened by a state of mind and not a state of things. "I wanted to live, for I understood all too well that I was not living but fighting a shadow of death; and there was no one to give me life, and I could not take hold of it." Outwardly, she had to fight the blatant materialism of decadent convent life; inwardly, the surreptitious angelism of her devout milieu. Of the two, the second presented by far the graver problem.

"Illuminism," fairly describable as the heresy of subjective enlightenment, was rampant in sixteenth century

Spain; and one should remember that, apart from its sophistication, it exercised the great attraction of appearing to be the Catholic answer to Luther's theological reconquest of the "I." No doubt it would have been easier on St. Teresa's nerves to recoil defensively from a crude lie against heaven into a refined one against earth. Superficially, her *Life* would in consequence read as a much less disturbed and disturbing document. But it is evidence precisely of her depth and authenticity that she could not advance inwardly so long as that direction stood, however remotely, for an escape that the Martha within her harassed and questioned the Mary to deliver her from a sleep-walker's fate.

CONFESSION with the newly-founded Jesuits, therefore, proved St. Teresa's turning-point. They taught her a valid psychology with which to explore her mind hitherto wrapt in devotion; and, by gearing her meditation to the Gospel, steadied her attention upon the mystery of the Incarnation. No better antidote could have been prescribed for one afflicted, through the circumstances of her time and station, by an ambiguous attitude toward matter. The results were startling.

Discipline freed her latent analytical powers, and her introspection, sharpened by method, attained an unexpected quality of objectification: the fabulous series of visions recounted in the *Life* now began. One cannot but notice that the mystical locution that forecast them paraphrased the promise made to the Samaritan woman by the well: "I will give thee," she heard, "I will give thee a living book." The woman who, in childhood, ran away from home to seek martyrdom in "Moorish lands" after reading the lives of saints; who, in adolescence had her head turned by books of chivalry; who, in youth, entered Carmel on reading St. Jerome's *Epistle* and felt called to contemplation by reading Osuna's *Third Alphabet*, could now "read" her inmost thought and feelings as upon a vast illuminated page.

As knowledge of self ripened, the seed of knowledge



of the meaning of Christ was sown. The sentence in the *Life* recording the first signs of its maturing still sways with her own excitement and gratitude: "Now, now begin the flowers to open; now they begin to give forth cent."

It was her own process of self-fulfillment that she was witnessing; for the purpose of Mary is dialogue, not monologue, however intense; dialogue in order that, by virtue of confrontation with the meaning of the Redeemer, the whole truth about the redeemed will out. The mind in monologue is like a dark and well-sealed chamber; but as such, though it promotes recollection, it also tends to hide from the mind its very contents and whatever processes may be obscurely affecting them. Dialogue accepts the challenge as well as the benediction of the light; "for no cobweb will pass unnoticed in a room thrown full open to the sun."

"Mysticism has not the patience to wait for God's revelation." Kierkegaard's seems the wisest of Protestant objections to the Catholic "craft of prayer," and it repays to study in its light the entirely new predicament that befell St. Teresa at this point; for it was distinctly a crisis of impatience. The confrontation, by the very fact that it yielded truth about human nature, made St. Teresa acutely aware that God cannot be known in this life and condition.

As a result, an overwhelming longing for death possessed her; a longing she later defined, with characteristic perspicacity, as "the sensual child." She epitomized it then in a phrase borrowed from Spanish folk-song and later used also by St. John of the Cross, namely, the celebrated *muero porque no muero*, "I die because I do not die."

Bossuet, who was always splendid but not always subtle, described her predicament as an altogether new *genre* of martyrdom: *Dieu l'attire et Dieu la retient*. His words are flawless but not so, as will be seen, his sense. If it were, then Kierkegaard's objection would be largely justified. For the fact insufficiently noticed by Bossuet and other panegyrists thereafter is that the crisis arose because St. Teresa's intellectual development was as yet incomplete.

The history of her mind reflects all the religious tendencies prevalent in Spain during the sixteenth century. From the Franciscans she learned devotion; from the Jesuits, psychology; from the Dominicans, theology. It was this last influence that she was lacking in the period epitomized by the "I die because I do not die." When it came in the person of Friar Domingo Báñez, perhaps the best thomist of his time, Carmelite mysticism was born; for Carmelite mysticism, the glory of Spanish religion in the Golden Age, is the amalgam of these various tendencies accomplished by St. Teresa's individualistic and practical mind.

The idea, to which Báñez introduced her comes from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. He impressed upon

her the notion that God may be loved through all things. Her development was now complete because she was aware of the transcendence of God and of his twofold immanence. Franciscan devotion had taught her to love the God above; Jesuit psychology to seek the God within; Báñez taught her to love and to seek through created things. Her gaze need no longer shift questioningly from the breviary to the hills, for to the Bible and the "living book" of the visions had been added the book of water, sky and earth.

No part of her now lay outside religious life. It was the Martha within her who then set forth to reform Carmel and taught the world about "the holy idleness of Mary." What Bossuet said of her distress therefore applies much more significantly to her balance: that God drew and God withheld her, that she loved both Creator and creation.

Because that balance had been achieved, St. Teresa was to write finer books than the *Life* after 1562, the year in which she completed its first version, met Báñez and founded her first reformed convent (St. Joseph's of Avila). She was not, however, to write one more important. Finally, even the authority of *The Interior Castle* rests upon that of the *Life*, though the former is undoubtedly her masterpiece; "for by then, the silversmith knew so much better the craft."

The *Life* bore the brunt of her fate, not only before the Inquisition, which examined it for fifteen uneasy years, but before her own consciousness. She referred to it as "my soul" and asked that it should be known as *The Book of the Mercies of God*. Indeed, it is a book of mercies because it is a record of conflicts triumphantly withstood. Subtle in self-analysis and blunt in language, it is a classic both of mystical theology and of Spanish literature. And classics are to humans what the bone is to the dog: a hard, savorous substance to be dug up again and again, not just to please the palate, but to exercise the teeth.

Live Oak in a Cold November Mist

The cold oak in the mourning day
Has lost no leaves:
Wet-green within a mist it stands
and grieves.

There is an opulence of dereliction here,
A finery to death addressed,
An icy shiningness of surface pressed
Close to occasion and to fear.

Fog, rising, thickens,
And the summer's height
Knows limitation and strict measurement
And bitter wisdom in a growing night.

JOHN HAZARD WILDMAN

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Wilde Playing Oscar's Part

HORACE GREGORY

THE YEAR 1962 may seem to be a strange time to re-evaluate Oscar Wilde. The date of his death—1900, the year of the Paris Exposition—is like an echo of half-forgotten things. The gas-lit events of London's 1890's which cast lurid lights and shadows on the Wilde trials are far away. Yet the occasion to take a fresh view of Wilde's place in literature is here. And Rupert Hart-Davis has done it adroitly, in *The Letters of Oscar Wilde*. (Harcourt, Brace & World. \$15.)

Those who remember the brilliance of Mr. Hart-Davis's life of Hugh Walpole will be prepared for his excellence in annotating Wilde's letters. His book has all the merits that "official" biographies hope for and never attain. It will probably become the best "life" of Oscar Wilde in existence.

There have been no lack of writings on Wilde. Perhaps the best known, and most useless, are A. E. Housman's sentimental lyrics (when Wilde was sentenced for a term in jail) which ran something like, "O they're sending him to prison for the color of his hair," and Frank Harris' rakish and sensational *Life of Oscar Wilde*. Both were, of course, by-products of the Wilde myth, which included a homosexual martyrdom.

Even as late as two years before his death, Wilde's wit was far superior to the mawkishness of many of his admirers. He foresaw the cult which in his defense admirers would join and cherish. Writing to Robert Ross, he remarked, "I shall now live as the Infamous St. Oscar of Oxford."

It is in W. B. Yeats' autobiographies that we have a first glimpse of the Oscar Wilde who holds the center of the stage in Rupert Hart-Davis's collection of his letters. A second glimpse came in A. J. A. Symons' incomplete, yet fascinating, "Oscar Wilde at Oxford." The third was in Vyvyan Holland's *Son of Oscar Wilde*. These memoirs, studies and impressions supply a backdrop for the full figure presented in the letters, and of these, Yeats' chapter, "The Tragic Generation," is easily the most important.

Yeats saw Wilde as the center of a group of young men who were bent on self-destruction. The group included Lionel Johnson and Ernest Dowson, and to these two poets, Charles Conder, the painter, may be added, for he too shared their end-of-the-century *Zeitgeist*, their revolt against the conventions of Victorian middle-

class society and the great disorder of their private lives. Their lack of internal discipline soon brought disaster and justified the title of Yeats' chapter—but there is more to Yeats' view of Wilde than that.

Yeats also saw Wilde as a figure in the Anglo-Irish tradition, his position in society made violently dubious by the fact that his father, Sir William Wilde, a famous ear surgeon, had a ridiculously scandalous love affair with one of his patients. His wife, Lady Wilde, was as strange a mother as Sir William was a father. She was a flamboyant blue-stocking who wrote under the name of "Sperenza" and no doubt helped inspire her son Oscar; at the very least, the best of his early letters (a holiday in Venice, inaccurately observed, but very exciting) is written to her.

Wilde's heritage was not to be shaken off. For a precocious boy who made his way through Trinity College, Dublin and Magdalen College, Oxford by scholarships, the heritage held fantastic ironies and contrasts; it was a complex of brilliance and near-madness, of pride in possessing genius and fear of social annihilation. Wilde's deep influence on Yeats was in terms of warning—Wilde's great need was strength to resist the fatal elements in his heritage. Yeats saw Wilde's decline with humane perception, yet Wilde's failures were examples that he made sure not to follow.

All this is not to say Yeats failed to appreciate Wilde's genius. He knew the value of Wilde's contribution to the age, but for himself Yeats made ready to drop the florid decor of the 1890's, even to the end-of-the-century regret at being "idle singers of an idle day," even to the dismissal of his own Celtic "twilight," and to find "more enterprise in walking naked." The strain of paganism in Yeats owes something to Wilde.

AT TRINITY Wilde came under the influence of the Rev. John Pentland Mahaffy, his "best and first teacher," whose authority on Greek culture was then famous, whose wit showed glittering discontent with the world as he found it, and whose conversation delighted all who heard him. He fused Anglican Church principles with neo-Greek paganism, and it was his hand that stayed Wilde's early impulse to enter the Catholic Church.

At Oxford, Mahaffy's influence on Wilde was overlaid by the twin forces of John Ruskin and Walter Pater. Ruskin's effort to lift the working man into an

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aesthetic ideal of socialism was joined (in Wilde's sensibilities at least) by Pater's attacks on absolute values—which opened the way to his particular cult of paganism, including his infatuation with male beauty. In following the leads of Mahaffy, Ruskin and Pater, Wilde substituted cult worship for religion.

If half of Wilde's example to Yeats was a warning to walk beyond the *Zeitgeist*, Bernard Shaw's debt held no tragic reverberations. In retrospect it can be seen that Wilde's social comedies bridged the gap in the tradition which began with Congreve, was continued by Goldsmith and came to a stop with Sheridan until Wilde revived it and prepared the stage for Shaw. Wilde's revival was a rebirth of wit behind the footlights—and his aphorisms went several steps further than Pater's flirtations with relativity—they turned the conventional absolute values of Victorian society upside down. And there is only one short step between *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *You Never Can Tell*.

Shaw's genius was of obviously sturdier make than Wilde's. In his sharpest turns of wit, Wilde had the startling insights and instincts of a hugely spoiled, yet brilliantly innocent child. Shaw's wit was anything but childish, however it flashed, its intentions were mature, and it quickly took advantage of Wilde's discovery that suspense in the theatre was often created by an audience waiting to hear the next epigram.

The reactions of Yeats and Shaw to Wilde's successes and failures should be not underestimated. Among Anglo-Irish writers of his day Wilde was a great catalyst and teacher; and as he became the most engaging conversationalist in London, every lecture hall, every editorial office he entered became his classroom. His showmanship was part of his accomplishment; in their separate ways both Yeats and Shaw became twentieth century showmen of the first order.

SINGULARLY ENOUGH, Wilde's letters are those of an actor. The man is slightly more than life-size—he is Wilde playing the part of Oscar. His lines have quickened perception rather than wisdom.

Until he was sent to prison, Wilde refused to know himself—which was certainly un-Greek! He endeared himself to his friends by his lack of malice; his nearest approach is in his delightful remarks on the American blue-stockings, Margaret Fuller, "to whom Venus gave

everything except beauty, and Pallas everything except wisdom." He also had an actor's love of purple phrasing which ruined his poems and is overheard in his comment on his play, *Salome*: "I hear London, like some grey monster, is raging over the publication of *Salome*, but I am at peace for the moment: all I desire is that the wind would cry like a thing whose heart is broken."

These lines are of the same unfortunate quality that reduces his long poem, "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" to bathos. The poem is an actor's work rather than a poet's. In one of his letters, Wilde confessed that the "Ballad" was less a work of art than an effort at propaganda—and so it was. It was both theatrical, and (for the occasion of Wilde's release from Reading Gaol and his protest against capital punishment), effective. The same velveteen style entered much of Wilde's narrative prose—which is why *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is almost unreadable today.

In his letters, as in everything else he wrote, Wilde was at his best in the making of epigrams—in these his perceptions rang with authority, and among the most memorable are his remarks on doctors: "I should go and see my doctor today, but I don't like to, as I am not feeling very well. I only care to see doctors when I am in perfect health; then they comfort one, but when one is ill, they are most depressing." Wilde's truly histrionic gifts came from the altars of comic genius.

THE EVIDENCE of Wilde's domestic and public tragedy runs its full course throughout the letters. He thought of his wife as Ophelia and himself as Hamlet. This conceit was among his fatal errors, for he was really the melancholy Jacques of *As You Like It* mis-married to his unfortunate wife, who was Cordelia. More literally, he was a nineteenth century Irishman who loved a Lord too well—and Lord Alfred Douglas was as nasty as you please—a force of active evil which held attraction for the immature Wilde. Wilde's homosexuality was indeed a prolonged adolescence. Not until he was released from Reading Gaol (which was too late) did he begin to know himself. His growing stature was shown in the powerful letters he wrote against the brutality of the British penal system. In these his voice was clear and strong, his intonations unmarred by the tearful self-pity which vitiates the pages of *De Profundis*.

Wilde's generosity of spirit is shown everywhere. Of his intimate friends, only Robert Ross was of sufficient stature to understand him, and in the closing years of his life, Ross' care to Wilde's affairs was scarcely less than heroic. Among Ross' regrets was that he discouraged Wilde's efforts to join Ross in the Catholic Church. It was not until the last hours of Wilde's life that a priest was called to administer a conditional Baptism. Wilde could not entirely escape the saturnalia of his self-destruction.



Cassandra Grown Tired

DAVID LITTLEJOHN

ROBINSON Jeffers, the doom-shouting Inhumanist Poet of two generations, died early this year at Tor House, his hand-built hermitage on the California coast. It took his death to remind most readers that he had in fact still been alive.

Even to the tiny world that pays attention to poets, Jeffers had effectively been dead for years. Less attention was paid to his last two books than to any before. The critics, such as Mark Van Doren, who had hailed him twenty and thirty years earlier as the great hope of American verse, had nothing to say. They had, one suspects, changed their minds.

The triumph of Jeffers' earliest works, like *Roan Stallion* and *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, had been equalled again only once, when his adaptation of Euripides' *Medea* made Broadway in 1946; but that was Judith Anderson's *Medea*, and not Robinson Jeffers'. The big *Selected Poetry* has been out of print for twenty years; his little Modern Library collection, slipped off the lists a year or two ago. And now he is gone.

No doubt, one of the reasons men seized on Jeffers in the twenties and thirties was that he was writing readable poetry, coherent and powerful narrative verse. He still cared very much to be understood. Jeffers explained later that "the most 'modern' of English poetry seemed to me thoroughly defeatist, as if poetry were in terror of prose, and desperately trying to save its soul from the victor by giving up its body. It was becoming slight and fantastic, abstract, unreal, eccentric."

To those who, like him, were disaffected by the preciosities and pedantries of the New Poets, of Eliot and Pound and the Imagists, Jeffers seemed a sound American voice. Here was a sort of disillusioned Walt Whitman, rolling out nightmarish tragedies and marsh landscape studies of the California coast in long rhetorical lines. These were poems to be shouted aloud. Surely *this* was the American tradition Whitman and Robinson had given on to Sandburg and Frost and Lindsay, to Edgar Lee Masters and Robinson Jeffers. Great poetry, it seemed, could still speak to the people and be understood.

This may be correct, but none of these men has proved it—partly because "the people," at least the American people, no longer read poetry, if ever they

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did. Thirty-four years ago, considering the question "Is Verse a Dying Technique?", Edmund Wilson concluded that with people like Lawrence and Joyce on the one hand, writing what was called "prose," and people like Sandburg and Jeffers, on the other, writing what was called "poetry," the old distinctions had simply ceased to mean. Jeffers' long narrative poems of tortured blood-and-lust passions on the primeval, hawk-haunted coast were only D. H. Lawrence novels reset in dithyrambic verse, Wilson claimed—and scarcely the more successful for being in verse. The best of these narratives, most of them long forgotten—*Roan Stallion*, perhaps; *Thurso's Landing*; *Cawdor*; *Give Your Heart to the Hawks* (a Jeffers title if there ever was one); certainly *The Loving Shepherdess*—might at least be read today and still in print, had they been written in prose.

Jeffers has been buried, however, not so much by the style he chose—Frost is still very much with us, to say nothing of the abstract and eccentric New Poets—as by what he had to say. "God-if-there-is-a-God is neutral"; for him at best the source and summation of his everlasting rocks and hawks and oceans. Man is vile and valueless, a chance bit of cosmic dust caught between spectral epochs. Soon he will be dissolved and scattered again so that primeval Beauty can reign, eternally undisfigured by his excremental acts, in "the enormous dawns of time after we perish." "A day will come when the earth/Will scratch herself and smile and rub off humanity."

Jeffers may have been the only public spokesman of our time actively anticipating the equivalent of a nuclear war. Man's story, for him, has been one of the pettiest, most hateful cruelties; his narrative poems are a bloody sequence of violent crimes, his "lyrics" are screaming with majestic birds and beasts whipped and mangled by their master Man. The second World War, to Jeffers as grotesque as it was predictable, gave the occasion for his most scornfully misanthropic verse—and probably his worst.

. . . The earth is a star, its human element
Is what darkens it. War is evil, the peace will be
evil, cruelty is evil; death is not evil. But the
breed of man

Has been queer from the start. It looks like a
botched experiment that has run wild and ought
to be stopped.

The depths of Jeffers' repetitive, ranting abuse were reached in the title poem of *The Double Axe* in 1948. Not since Lemuel Gulliver met the Yahoos has the human race been quite so despicably dismissed.

... I am sick tonight, I am human:

There is only one animal that hates himself. Truly
the sweating toad and the poison-gorged pit-
viper

Are content with their natures. I'll be a stone at the
bottom of the sea, or any bush on the mountain,
But not this ghost-ridden blood-and-bone thing,
civil war on two legs and the stars' contempt,
this walking farce,

This ape, this—denatured ape, this—citizen—...

BUT Gulliver was not Swift, and Jeffers, perhaps was not entirely the Old Inhumanist of *The Double Axe*. He could find beauty, if not in the life and pleasures of man, at least in his sufferings and death—in the frenzied high death-defying madness of his Medeas and Clytemnestras, his Tamar Cauldwells and Helen Thursos. Mellowing just a bit at 64, he could go so far as to say

It is easy to know the beauty of inhuman things,
sea, storm and mountain; it is their soul and their
meaning.

Humanity has its lesser beauty, impure and painful;
we have to harden our hearts to bear it.

I have hardened my heart only a little: I have
learned that happiness is important, but pain
gives importance ...

Or, earlier,

Praise life, it deserves praise, but the praise of life
That forgets the pain is a pebble
Rattled in a dry gourd.

He could find beauty too in the impersonal, glacier-like movements of masses—even masses preparing for war. And like Lawrence, he could find traces of it in our "elemental" sub-nature, the non-human blood-life that the men and women of his Monterey tales tried to share with their stallions and hawks. For the most part, though, and increasingly, he had to turn away from man to find it.

... At least

Love your eyes that can see, your mind that can
Hear the music, the thunder of wings. Love the
wild swan.

The shock of this message, and the impulsive violence of Jeffers' expression of it may have helped assure him an audience on first appearance. But as years went on, and the self-same fulminations kept crackling out of Tor House—his annual burnt offerings to appease the hungry coastside gods, Jeffers once called them—fewer and fewer were shocked, or even listening. We had other concerns, and other favorites. Jeffers knew well that no one was dancing, but for forty years he never changed the tune. First bitterly, then resignedly

—"You and I, Cassandra"—he commented on his *apartheid*.

Therefore though not forgotten, not loved, in gray
old years in the evening leaning
Over the gray stones of the tower-top
You shall be called heartless and blind.

Sixteen years later, he was.

—As for me: laugh at me. I agree with you. It is a
foolish business to see the future and screech
at it.

One should watch and not speak. And patriotism
has run the world through so many blood lakes:
and we always fall in.

"Patriotism" and its follies confounded Jeffers, especially when confronted by the horrors of the War. But never in his many later "public" poems did he attain the finesse in well-wrought Olympian disgust of "Shine, Perishing Republic" of 1925, perhaps his best-known shorter poem—a poem, like so many of Jeffers', that could survive on its title alone.

In fact, this failure to develop, or refusal to change, has probably been one of the most devastating causes of Jeffers' own "perishing." We are appalled, or certainly at least not attracted, by a monolithic, unjointed, unmodulated career. How much of the appeal of Yeats, for example, or O'Neill, or Thomas Mann, to speak only of modern artists, would be lost without the satisfying movement from Early to Middle to Late. Jeffers could only say the same things over and over, from one generation to another; not only do the subjects lose their force, but so does he. After forty years of screeching, Cassandra grows tired.

The deficiencies, the idiosyncrasies, even the original, very personal strengths that one could accept in the early poems became tedious, empty, and unconvincing when repeated for the hundredth time. One begins, probably unfairly, to suspect the poet's own sincerity. The same spasmodic-Gothic graveyard imagery, the buckets of blood, the everlasting hawk-symbols and rock-symbols and bone-symbols; the inability to evoke any but a small family of mad Jeffersean characters, all incestuous or murderous or parent-hating, all violently rhapsodic, all death-wishing; the tasteless supernaturalism, the adolescent perversions of Christianity, the attempts to translate a misunderstood modern science into modern poetry; above all, the insistent "Inhumanism."

I have shared in my time the human illusions, the
muddy foolishness

And craving passions, but something thirty years
ago pulled me

Out of the tide-wash; I must not even pretend
To be one of the people. I must stand here
Alone with open eyes in the clear air growing old,
Watching with interest and only a little nausea
The cheating shepherds, this time of the dema-

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gogues and the docile people, the shifts of power,
And pitiless general wars that prepare the fall;
But also the enormous unhuman beauty of things;
rock, sea and stars, fool-proof and permanent. . . .

Thirty years ago, this had worked; but no longer. Even the most sympathetic critics were disappointed as book after book came out, and no new paths were taken, no change, no self-renewal occurred. Mark Van Doren, who all but "discovered" Jeffers' first major book, already saw, while still affording high praise to his second, the dangers of his *idée fixe*: "He seems to be knocking his head to pieces against the night."

IT IS HARD to say, though, where one would have had Jeffers go. The most benignantly-inclined cannot deny a measure of truth to his ugly Inhumanist visions—and he need not look far beyond himself. Still, since *we* cannot do it, it is hateful to think that another man could stop on that dry rock for a lifetime, without even trying to move. There is hope for man at least in Yoknapatawpha, but none on the wuthering heights south of Monterey. We insist on our "Towers beyond Tragedy," even as we realize what they are made of: to know the lie, and yet use it.

Inventing all the objections, Jeffers had his own final word in a testament called "Self-Criticism in February," written in 1937 (*italics mine*):

The bay is not blue but sombre yellow
With wrack from the battered valley, it is speckled
with violent foam-heads
And tiger-striped with long lovely storm shadows.
*You love this better than the other mask; better
eyes than yours
Would feel the equal beauty in the blue.
It is certain you have loved the beauty of storm
disproportionately.*
But the present time is not pastoral, but founded
On violence, pointed for more massive violence:
perhaps it is not
Perversity but need that perceives the storm-
beauty.
*Well, bite on this: your poems are too full of
ghosts and demons,
And people like phantoms—how often life's are—
And passion so strained that the clay mouths go
praying for destruction—
Alas, it is not unusual in life;
To every soul at some time. But why insist on it?
And now
For the worst fault: you have never mistaken
Demon nor passion nor idealism for the real God.
Then what is most disliked in those verses
Remains most true. Unfortunately. If only you
could sing
That God is love, or perhaps that social
Justice will soon prevail.* I can tell lies in prose.

THE SCREEN

No Remembrance of Things Past

EITHER WE'RE getting used to the French New Wave directors, or else the new New Wave films are less far out than the earlier samples. In any case the latest batch of French films to reach our screens seem to be striving less hard for brilliance. They are extraordinarily good movies, and though provocative and employing lively techniques, they are somewhat old-fashioned and not afraid to be a little sentimental, in a good sense.

Interestingly enough, two of the imports from France, both by young men directing their first feature films, have plots in which amnesiacs figure largely. "The Long Absence" is the work of director Henri Colpi, and very fine work it is: sensitive, reflective and charged with emotion that holds the audience without the use of cinematic tricks. Much of the success of his picture stems from the moving performances he got from his two leads and from the screenplay so well written by Marguerite Duras.

She tells a Pirandello-like story about a middle-aged woman who runs her own café in a little village on the Seine. One day this woman, who thought herself a widow, receives a great shock. She is startled to find a striking resemblance between the lethargic, opera-singing tramp who passes her café every day and her husband supposedly killed in a German concentration camp fifteen years ago. She follows the man, becomes convinced of his identity as she sees him in his hovel and doing his rag-picking work, succeeds in striking up a friendship after he gets over his timidity, and finally invites him to dinner at her café hoping to help him remember things past.

Director Colpi tells this simple story slowly and with a touch of mystery that is never resolved. Is the man, who has no memory, the husband? Is the woman really convinced and will she be able to recall their past? Alida Valli is so fine in the role of the striving, pent-up woman that you find yourself struggling for her. And Georges Wilson plays the slow-thinking tramp with such dignity that you hope against hope that these two will find the happiness they deserve. In scene after scene, Colpi fuses music, photography, the touching story and good acting into a poetic whole; and the finale—still unresolved—is in perfect keeping with the entire cinematic poem.

EVEN MORE poetic is "Sundays and Cybele," an extraordinarily beautiful film directed by Serge Bourguignon. He is inclined from time to time to indulge in rather obvious, arty tricks with the camera, but once he settles down to a straightforward, no-nonsense

telling of the story and establishing the mood, his picture becomes a sparkling gem.

This story, stemming from the novel *Les Dimanches de Ville d'Avray*, is an off-beat affair about a pilot who crashed in Asia, and who was nursed back to health by the woman who is now his mistress. They live in a French village where he aimlessly drifts from day to day wondering who he is and attempting to regain his memory. Then everything changes. Quite by accident, he meets a motherless, twelve-year-old girl who is being ditched by her father in the village convent school. Moved by the child's sad plight, the amnesia victim poses as her father and takes her out for several hours every Sunday. Their friendship blossoms into a kind of playful love and concern for each other. The man becomes less interested in his nurse-mistress and in searching for the past; he is happy in the present. And the girl, an awakening adolescent, begins to forget her sordid background and to enjoy her Sundays and to look forward to her future when she will be old enough to marry her handsome, thoughtful playmate.

"Sundays and Cybele" must by no means be confused with "Lolita." While the girl, because of her grim background, is wise beyond her years and knows how to make the man jealous just as she is jealous of his mistress, the relationship between them is on an idyllic, almost platonic level. That it does not continue is due to the more sober-minded, suspicious adults around them. And the bitter finale to this sweet-sad affair is almost unbearable.

It is greatly to director Bourguignon's credit that the performances throughout are impeccable. Hardy Kruger, a German actor who has given several good movie performances, has never been better than as the groping amnesiac whose selfless love for the young girl makes him into a new man. Pretty Nicole Courcel glows as the mistress-nurse whose worries about her lover's new interests change to understanding. And the minor roles are well played too. But it is Patricia Gozzi as the twelve-year-old who is so amazing and heart-breaking. It is frequently impossible with a child actor to tell whether the director or the child should have most credit for a first-rate performance. In this case both deserve applause. Young Miss Gozzi is so right in the role that she could be the girl playing herself.

But no doubt Bourguignon merits most praise. He not only guided his actors adeptly through their scenes, but the scenes themselves with their lovely black-and-white photography of the woods and ponds, and the fascinating sound track that skillfully employs Tibetan music as well as excerpts from Handel, Respighi and Charpentier's Christmas Mass all become part of this lyrical cinema. The total effect is unforgettable.

ALSO OFF-BEAT, but in an entirely different artistic vein, is "The Lovers of Teruel," a movie that happily

combines drama, dance and cinema. At times its story in the present—which parallels a seventeenth-century Spanish legend, the theme of a ballet being danced by a gypsy troupe—is a bit difficult to follow. But after the first few minutes, the viewer finds the key to the transitions from reality to dreams to ballet, and then he settles back and enjoys what he sees and hears.

Seldom is ballet handled so well in a movie; and credit should indeed go to director Raymond Rouleau who succeeds, in spite of theatrical sets and the actual staging of a full-length ballet-within-a-ballet, in getting motion and lively action into his pictures. Applause should also go to Claude Renoir for his stunning color photography throughout and to Mikis Theodorakis, whose musical score adds so much vitality to the whole. The dancers are excellent, and Ludmila Tcherina in the lead role of the main plot as well as in the ballet is superb. Even movie-goers who are not balletomanes will be won by Miss Tcherina's dancing and expressively-sad beauty. Obviously "The Lovers of Teruel" is not for everybody, but those who do see it will find it a rare treat and another welcome gift from France.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

THE STAGE

Figuring Out Loud

SOMETHING MORE than 2,300 new works of fiction are published in the United States every year. If twenty-three, or one per cent, are worth reading, we consider it a banner year. So far this season fifteen new plays and spectacles have opened on Broadway, of which two—"Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" and "Beyond the Fringe"—are worth seeing. I work the percentage out to 13.333. The theater, then, is thirteen times as flourishing as the novel, and you will please keep that in mind as an antidote to what follows. Here-with some hangnail sketches of certain previously un-keen-ed-over events.

The opening number of "Mr. President" is an atrocious piece of work . . . and from then on it is all downhill. Robert Ryan, as an Ike-type chief executive, wheezes that he is "just someone doing the best he can/a simple American who happens to be President." Later, Irving Berlin, a simple American who once knew how to write songs, until he was entirely swallowed up in calico and jingoism, continues his leveling job with "Meat and potatoes/fried eggs and ham/that's the kind of guy I am." His flare for rhyme manifests itself in "The Secret Service makes me nervous"; and his over-all mastery of the secrets of the human heart in a song which instructs a young girl in the art of determining if one is in love: "He's specially special." The musical

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also contains jokes, by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, about vicuna coats and rocking-chairs, and a revelatory glimpse of what our ex-Presidents do in retirement: they judge cake-baking contests at county fairs. (*At the St. James*)

"Calculated Risk" is a thriller which kept me fixed on the edge of my seat for a considerable time, or until I gave up trying to convince my portly neighbor that I really did want to get up and go. Then I sat back and took notes, which I refuse to give a shape to: Board room of a New England textile manufacturer. Chicany. Corporate raider is trying to take over the business. Who among the nine character actors is his secret ally? Will Joseph Cotten's catatonic acting style and ventriloquist's voice ever be exorcised from my memory? Will the audience laugh *every time* the words bastard or sonofabitch are spit-balled over the footlights? Comic relief: "How can you add figures and talk at the same time? I have two heads."

Spinoza: "Do not accuse, do not weep, understand." I understand. (*At the Ambassador*)

If Sid Caesar were half as talented as Zero Mostel, "Little Me" would be a quarter as amusing as "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum." But Caesar, a gifted enough fellow when measured by mortal standards, is of course only a quarter as talented as Mostel, so "Little Me" is only. . . . Put it this way: If Virginia Martin were a third as slick as Rosalind Russell then "Little Me" would be a sixth as slick as "Auntie Mame." Or try this: If Cy Coleman were 23 per cent as inventive a song writer as Frank Loesser, "Little Me". . . . It's the only way you can stand up to this season. Ya gotta figure the percentages, like I said. (*At the Lunt-Fontane*)

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Catholic Self-Criticism

Chicago, Ill.

TO THE EDITORS: I find it difficult to disagree with most of Mr. O'Gara's comments on my column [Oct. 26], since in his comments he includes precisely those elements of qualification which I thought were absent in much of the summer crop of self-criticism. I would, however, express some doubt about his statement that the progress of the last decade and a half has largely been prompted by self-criticism. This statement is true, of course, to the extent that anyone who initiates change is dissatisfied with the status quo, but I would think that those who promoted the changes since the end of World War II were being motivated by forces quite independent of the literary self-criticism. I would have no doubt that the writings of Ellis, O'Dea and Weigel, for example, influenced the changes of the last fifteen

years, but I would suspect that they in turn were the result of many of the changes already going on—particularly Catholic socio-economic advances.

Within the general framework of agreement that Mr. O'Gara and I share (there is a need for self-criticism, the American Church is progressing rapidly, the self-critics must expect themselves to be criticized), there are at least three kinds of differences which I observe.

First of all, there is quite obviously a difference in emphasis based on a different vantage point. Things are moving at different speeds in various parts of the country. Mr. O'Gara and I acknowledge that this factor influences our judgments about the American Church. The key question, of course, is which vantage point enables one to get a better view. After our friendly foundation has provided the week in Oklahoma for Mr. O'Gara and his colleagues, perhaps it would be willing to finance a detailed sociological study of American Catholicism which would substitute for the current guesswork (or for impressions gleaned from letters to editors). Until that happy date, I would still be inclined to argue that my experience is more typical than Mr. O'Gara's.

The second difference is one of rhetoric. I would not argue that a critic must present a total picture of the phenomenon with which he is concerned, but I would think that the critic must not leave key elements out of the picture. In the quote from *The Church and the Suburbs* which Mr. O'Gara turned against me, I spoke of not emphasizing "vast areas of brightness" as much as the problems; this I think is the proper role of the critic. But it is one thing not to emphasize brightness as much as problems and it is quite another to leave out the brightness altogether. I could not escape the impression that The Commonweal symposium was, generally speaking, inclined to despair in that its writers not only saw nothing encouraging, but also saw no way out of the present gloomy situation.

Mr. O'Gara states that the country is still full of parishes where the liturgical movement does not exist; the country is still full of Catholic schools where the parents' role is to be seen but not heard. I would hardly question these statements; but I wonder whether these parishes will be changed by criticism which implies that all parishes are that way or by criticism which compares them to the rapidly increasing number of parishes that are different. (In one middle-western Archdiocese, for example, over half the parishes have some form of liturgical participation.)

The most obvious example of the one-sided picture offered by the "rhetoric of despair" was the Cunneen article on the parish (concerning which I wrote a letter that The Commonweal did not publish). I am willing to tolerate all kinds of *angst* in self-criticism, but when the implicit conclusion seems to be that there is nothing that can be done, I begin to wonder if the *angst* is blind-

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ing the critic to what is being done. (For example, Mr. Cunneen chose to comment on the poor state of Holy Name Communion breakfasts, but did not advert to the parish lecture series movement which is growing rapidly and is bringing first rate speakers—including some former Commonweal staffers—to the hinterlands and the provinces.

My third difference with Mr. O'Gara is perhaps the most basic; I am more than a little uncomfortable with the methodology and the conceptual framework of current self-criticism. Part of this may be a social scientist's dissatisfaction with statements that cannot be statistically documented, especially when the few statistics which are available (graduate school plans of graduates of Catholic colleges, for example) tend to run against what self-criticism would lead us to expect. More importantly, however, I wonder whether the lay-clergy categories which are essential to the analysis of the self-critics are really so relevant or whether the culture lag theory which Mr. O'Gara mentions is more useful than a theory of social change which sees a double transition going on—from an immigrant church to an upper-middle-class church and from the Post-Tridentine world to the Ecumenical world, and recognizes that these transitions are affecting both the clergy and the laity with the pace of change going on varying rates for subgroups within the larger categories instead of at a uniform pace within each of the larger category. (Mr. O'Gara and Mr. Cunneen might find it hard to believe but there are parishes in the United States where "competent and educated" laymen lead organized campaigns *against* liturgical participation which their clergy are promoting. Which side would The Commonweal be on in such a debate?) Such a framework may lend itself less readily to prophetic moralizing, but it might make for more accurate analysis and more precise social planning.

(Rev.) ANDREW M. GREELEY

Juan Jose Arevalo

Frederick, Maryland

TO THE EDITORS: In reviewing Don Salvador de Madariaga's *Latin America Between the Eagle and the Bear* [September 7], Mr. Lawrence T. King clears up "one unfortunate slip," the "death" of Guatemalan President Juan José Arévalo in 1950. In the same paragraph, however, your reviewer slips twice when he claims that "Arévalo merely resigned in 1950 and is still very much in evidence in Guatemala where he once again is contending for the presidency on an unabashedly anti-U.S. platform."

In view of the close collaboration between one-time President Arévalo, who called himself a "spiritual Socialist," and another Guatemalan ex-President Colonel Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, who is now in Fidel Castro's Marxist-Leninist Cuba, it may be useful to record the

facts, past and present. Although Arévalo resigned on July 26, 1950, handing over the powers of his office to the Chief of the Armed Forces, he resumed his functions, once a strike crisis was settled, and was on hand to transmit the Presidency to Colonel Arbenz on March 15, 1951.

Today, Dr. Arévalo is in Mexico, having moved from Caracas, Venezuela, where he served on the faculty of the Central University. Thanks to a decision of President Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes, Arévalo would be free to return to Guatemala. His controversial book, *The Shark and the Sardines*, has been considerably toned down. At this stage of his career, candidate Arévalo would like to have people forget his role in the elevation of Arbenz and his former "unabashedly" anti-U.S. platform and policies.

(Rev.) JOSEPH F. THORNING

The Author Replies

El Cajon, Calif.

TO THE EDITORS: I am sure your readers will appreciate Father Thorning's additional information on Dr. Arévalo's background. I had neither the space nor inclination to delve further into the subject in my review. The only point I wanted to make was that Dr. Arévalo was *not* dead. I am at a loss to understand why Father Thorning scores two "slips" against me since his own letter confirms what I wrote: (1) Dr. Arévalo resigned in 1950 and (2) he is a candidate for the Guatemalan presidency (and as such an evident factor in that country's political life).

As for Dr. Arévalo's present position, I have seen nothing to indicate that he has abandoned his belief that the U. S. government is controlled by Wall Street financiers and that the main purpose of our foreign policy is to protect their interests. This certainly is an anti-U. S. stand, and it is the line that is being pushed by his followers in Guatemala. It is possible, of course, that Mr. Kennedy's handling of U. S. Steel has forced Dr. Arévalo to take a more realistic attitude toward the complexities of U. S. political life. I hope it has, but I just don't know.

I do know, however, that the edition of Dr. Arévalo's book currently being circulated in Latin America is a vitriolic tract against the U. S. The English-language edition published in the U. S. last year, which I reviewed in these pages, has been toned down. I believe this was done to attract U. S. readers and not out of any desire on Dr. Arévalo's part to hide his earlier collaboration with Col. Arbenz which is, after all, a matter of public record. If Dr. Arévalo is now anxious to forget this aspect of his career—as Father Thorning says—I would be the first to welcome the change, for it would indicate he is moving toward a more rational appraisal of the U. S.-Soviet conflict in Latin America.

LAWRENCE T. KING

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OF NOTE

The Constantinian Legacy

WHATEVER THE outcome of the Second Vatican Council, few are likely to forget the remarkable three years preceding the Council. During those years the Church was subjected to an intense analysis, the likes of which have rarely been seen in recent centuries. Out of this ferment came a number of unusually good articles and books on the contemporary Church. Among these was an article by Philip Scharper, the Editor-in-Chief of Sheed and Ward, which appeared in the October 1 issue of *Christianity and Crisis* (537 W. 121st St., New York 27, N.Y., \$5). An excerpt follows:

Whatever else may be said of our world, it is surely safe to say that it is post-Constantinian. It is also safe to say that too few Roman Catholics seem to realize this fact and to think and act accordingly. Constantine's brilliant improvisation of linking Christianity to the Roman Empire may have resulted in a political aggrandizement of the Church, but the political privileges were paid for by a loss of apostolic freedom both within and without the empire's borders. The tragic reality of *cuius regio, eius religio* existed long before the phrase.

Of equal importance is the fact that when political and ecclesial borders became coterminous, Catholics came to regard themselves not as a minority throughout the world but as a majority within a defined area, religiously as well as politically homogeneous. They acquired a majority mentality because they assumed a majority position, but both could be maintained only by preserving the fiction of a pseudo-Christendom and by relinquishing the arduous role of Christianity as a leaven, a dynamic minority at work in . . . the world.

But the Constantinian patrimony is, mercifully, almost exhausted, and its few remaining political farthings will soon be spent in Spain and portions of Latin America. There is, however, a large residue of cultural and religious coinage, and one effect of the Council, hopefully, would be to renounce this legacy unequivocally. . . .

One perduring consequence of the Constantinian embrace, for example, has been the tendency—tempting to a majority—to substitute coercion of whatever kind for persuasion, and thus to place high value upon outward conformity rather than upon inner commitment. Hence the baleful efforts, repeated throughout history to the present moment, to identify the Church with a particular political group or cultural constellation, with the consequence that the opponents of such groupings—"radicals," Socialists, novelists, abstract painters, et al—are led inevitably to become opponents of the Church itself.

The council must reaffirm, if not in ringing terms then

in reassuring action, the central Christian truth that the sincere conscience is the gift of God. Therefore the sincere conscience, be it of Buddhist, Adventist or atheist, is to be respected and revered, even as the Buddhist, Adventist and atheist are to be revered as images of God. . . .

The thrust toward freedom is often blind but always blessed, and it is the task of the Church to confront it positively, to give it direction by pointing it toward that perfect freedom of the sons of God. Increasingly in a world less than one-third Christian the Church must act out her historical task: she must bless all that is not evil but must not become identified with anything that she thus blesses. No nation has a unique or privileged claim to be called Catholic, nor does any given culture. The Church must be humbly at home in every nation and in every culture, but she must never again become the servant of any because she is the servant of all. . . .

Thus, the Church can no longer afford her identification, in many eyes, with capitalism. The Church did not create capitalism and strove to heal the wounds that capitalism inflicted. The social encyclicals of Leo XIII, Pius XI and John XXIII cannot validly be read as defenses of capitalism, although numerous Catholics have made that effort. But the fact remains that these encyclicals are judgments made from inside capitalism. Perhaps the Council will make it possible subsequently for the church to judge socialism from within as a result of severing those ties of fact that still link portions of the Church to an economy based primarily on profit. . . .

The Constantinian temptation is to have the church rule, even if it be through the support of the powerful of this world—the politician, the industrialist, the banker—and even if it be through the strategies of the world—statecraft, compromise, protection of vested interests. But the task of the Church is to serve. And to the poor and humble, who still make up the majority of mankind, the bishop-executive, the power-conscious priest and the well-heeled missionary can obscure the features of the poor Christ, who took upon Himself the form of a servant.

The Constantinian legacy can also be observed in the perduring tendency of many Catholics to flee to the catacombs not because of persecutions but because the catacombs hold a religiously homogeneous population and hence are "safe." Within the catacomb, once again, it is possible for the majority mentality to develop, because the Church can readily be viewed as the citadel to be defended against the nonbeliever, and divine truth can be regarded as a possession to be jealously guarded rather than a leaven to be shared.

But if the Council were to reaffirm the true character of Catholicism in the world—to live as a minority, humbly, simply, its task to leaven the mass—then the Council would encourage Catholics to examine more closely

their attitudes toward the political, cultural and religious patterns that confront them. Do we proliferate Catholic political parties, labor unions, fraternal societies, schools and colleges, or do we enter as witnesses those "secular" ones that already exist? Obviously, there is no single answer to these questions, nor even a single principle that would apply to every country and culture.

But to remind Catholics that they do not live as men apart, that they are indeed, even as individuals, the Church at her frontiers, would be to remind the Catholic of the intrinsic value of non-confessional structures. And it would hasten his entrance into them relying not upon the power or prestige of his church but upon the depth of his own faith and the fervor of his own charity.

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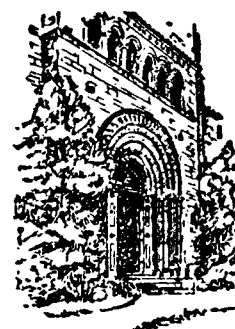
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Critics' Choices for Christmas

THOMAS CURLEY

Frontiers in American Catholicism. By Walter J. Ong, S.J. Macmillan. \$2.50. *American Catholic Crossroads.* By Walter J. Ong, S.J. Macmillan. \$3.50. *American Catholic Dilemma.* By Thomas F. O'Dea. Sheed & Ward. \$3. None of these books was published this year, but except for a few of Father Ong's essays I came to all three within the last six months. It may be presumptuous to recommend them to Commonweal readers, but even if one has read them, I think all can be read at least once again with profit.

In Parenthesis. By David Jones. Chilmark Press. \$5.75. This book was first published in London in 1937 and it does not call for many words by way of introduction. There are many new poets I have not read, but not since John Berryman's *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* have I come upon a writer so challenging and so exciting.

Morte D'Urban. By J. F. Powers. Doubleday. \$4.50. I reviewed this book for *The Commonweal*, and I will not add anything more here. Apart from the pleasures of criticism it is always pleasant, as Brendan Behan remarked of his Borstal days, to settle down for a good read.

Another Country. By James Baldwin. Dial. \$5.95. I don't know anybody who is indifferent to this novel. Baldwin can write badly, but he is basically a good writer who makes occasional mistakes. The larger, more important issues in this book have been discussed elsewhere. I shall make only one further generalization: nobody who wants to understand present-day America can afford to neglect Baldwin's work.

Answer from Limbo. By Brian Moore. Atlantic, Little-Brown. \$5. After one finishes this book, one wants to talk to somebody else who has read it. Moore writes so well about the *surface* of New York life (something native Americans find very difficult) that you want to know

if others are as provoked as you are by his refusal to write more. I have one question: has anyone else discerned a similarity between *Answer from Limbo* and *Another Country*?

Homecoming At Twilight. By Jacob Glatstein. Thomas Yoseloff. \$3.95. Aside from the fact that Mr. Glatstein is a well-known Yiddish poet, he has written the sort of novel we seldom see in English nowadays. One gets the feeling, as the narrator in this book says, that one is living an allegory in the real world of opened suitcases.

PHILIP DEASY

Patriotic Gore. By Edmund Wilson. Oxford. \$8.50. Even if the spate of centennial writings about the Civil War continues on to flood stage, it is unlikely that anything will surpass or even equal Mr. Wilson's contribution to our understanding of that national catastrophe. Here is God's plenty of reading pleasure in every conceivable variety: history, biography, literary criticism, literary history, poetry and fiction. The Wilsonian prose style, too, despite its author's own recent statement about its becoming "pale and impoverished," still impressively illustrates the great trinity of Lucidity, Force and Ease.

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie. By Muriel Spark. Lippincott. \$3.95. For the best of reasons, Muriel Spark is now receiving the recognition due her as one of the most gifted stylistic virtuosos. Her unique vision of *homo* (and/or *mulier*) *absurdus* is nowhere more enchantingly communicated than in this tale of an ineffable Edinburgh spinster teacher and her zany brood of student disciples.

Sowing and Growing. By Leonard Woolf. Harcourt, Brace. \$4.50 and \$5.95. In these days of "as told to" confessionals, autobiography as an art is a rarity. The first two volumes of Mr. Woolf's autobiography, which describe the years of his life up to 1911, prove that rarity. Mr. Woolf

has lived abundantly, and he writes effortlessly out of abundance. The portrait he draws is a striking one of a certain kind of modern man: intellectually tough, godless, cool and unillusioned—in short, "civilized."

William Hazlitt. By Herschel Baker. Harvard: Belknap Press. \$10. Another rarity these days is the art of biography, and in particular literary biography. Mr. Baker's *Hazlitt* is a masterful and felicitous combination of scholarship and art, an engrossing and probing study of a dramatic and complex figure in a dramatic and complex period of history. What Mr. Baker says of his subject is true of his own prose style: "He had a giant command of language and he used it with a giant's power."

The Rhetoric of Fiction. By Wayne C. Booth. University of Chicago Press. \$6.95. Malcolm Cowley has recently assured us that "the novel will continue to be the central form in American writing." That is all the more reason why a superb book of criticism on how to read a novel should be especially welcome. Fresh and unpedantic in his approach, although thoroughly knowledgeable, Mr. Booth raises and discusses all the questions that the reasonably close reader of serious fiction might want to ask.

JAMES FINN

The Letters of Oscar Wilde. Edited by Rupert Hart-Davis. Harcourt, Brace & World. \$15. These letters support Wilde's well-known assertion that he put his talent into his work and his genius into his life. They also reveal a person of deep and subtle feeling who, better than any of his contemporaries, was able to appreciate and comment on the glittering and terrible circumstances of his life.

The Council, Reform and Reunion. By Hans Küng. Sheed & Ward. \$3.95. If one were to recommend several from among the many books on the Council, this would probably be the

first choice. It stresses issues which are of first importance and merit immediate consideration, and it suggests what might be accomplished by the Council, but it does not minimize the hazards and obstacles that lie ahead.

On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine. By John Henry Newman. Sheed & Ward. \$5. Though never entirely forgotten, this essay has taken on new life in recent years and certainly merits republication. The new life is accounted for, of course, by the fact that, in considering the place of the layman in the Church, we are finally able to bring to the essay the sympathetic, critical attitude it deserves.

Religion and the Law. By Philip B. Kurland. Aldine. \$3.95. No single book can resolve the issues dealing with "Church and State and the Supreme Court," as this book is subtitled. Mr. Kurland does not claim to. But in offering a clear and comprehensive review of significant decisions of the Supreme Court, he does reveal the inadequacies of solutions that have been offered. His work is directly relevant to discussions of federal aid to public and parochial schools.

Letters of James Agee to Father Flye. Braziller. \$5. Father Flye had the perception and affection necessary to keep in his possession these many letters which make sharp the uneasiness, the uncertainties, the struggle and the mixed achievement that Agee knew. A fine and moving volume.

ANNE FREMANTLE

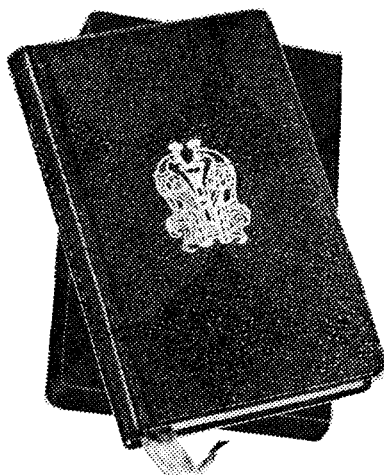
Around the World in 20 Years. By Irena Wiley. David McKay. \$4.95. This is a wonderful way to vicarious travel, and a warm, compassionate and courageous account of history, as well as of geography and manners. Mrs. Wiley, Polish by birth, and an accomplished sculptress, married a U.S. career diplomat and accompanied her husband to Moscow, Vienna, the Baltic States, Iran, Portugal, Hungary, Colombia and Panama—with side-trips to China, Japan and Greece. She writes with real horror of the Nazi take-over of Austria and

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the Communist take-over of Latvia, and with righteous anger of the wicked disparity of ways of living in Latin America. Everywhere, she sees always first as a Christian, then as a woman—and a witty one—third, but not lastly, as an artist, all three admirable viewpoints.

Serpents Delight. By Ruth Park. Doubleday. \$3.95. Here, at last, is a first-class new novelist, who is a dyed-in-the-wool Catholic. Ruth Park's story of a closely knit family of father, mother and four daughters, and of what happens when one of the girls thinks (or pretends she thinks) she has a vision, is brilliant. Each of the girls is a round, whole, living character, and of course Ma, heroine and villain, and Pa, victim, are marvelously realized. The story is superbly constructed—here is as well-made a story as I've ever read.

The Challenge of Hunger. By Father Noel Drogat, S.J. Newman. \$3.95. The millions of the ill-fed are in danger of being caught in the totalitarian trap. To say the least, as M. Michelet does in his introduction to Father Drogat's book, "We are not anxious for a world on which the rage of the starved and the vengeance of the humiliated will impose their rule." Everyone should read this book, if only to try and realize that things are getting worse, not better, all the time. Before World War II only thirty-eight per cent of all human beings born went hungry all their lives; now sixty per cent do. Storing our surpluses and paying farmers to leave land fallow just will not do, and reading *aloud* from Father Drogat should be a mandatory grace before meals—especially before Christmas dinner.

Consuela Bright. By Cornelia Jessey. Sheed and Ward. \$3.95. A good novel about a Jewish girl from Europe transplanted first to New York and then to the West, this novel gives a salutary view of Christians seen from the outside by one who came in. Consuela is a splendid character, and her relationships with the men and women in her life—her emancipated aunt, her unemancipated parents, her Christian and her Jewish beaux (both die), are well worked out.

The Silent Spring. By Rachel Carson. Houghton Mifflin. \$5. This is a

sober, somber, yet splendid book, and Miss Carson deserves a Nobel Prize for Preservation—which is surely as important as peace. First we must survive, and we cannot survive alone as this scientifically accurate book tells us. No chemist or doctor has contradicted a word of it, and it is perhaps the most pertinent book of the year.

RONALD ROLOFF

Understanding the Bible. By Ignatius Hunt, O.S.B. Sheed & Ward. \$3.95. The renaissance of Catholic biblical scholarship has created some confusion and uncertainty in the minds of non-specialists (including many priests) who are unable to follow the new developments with any consistency. In his wonderfully sensible book, Father Hunt provides exactly the sort of answers and perspective that are needed. From the broad questions of inspiration and inerrancy he proceeds to such perennially tantalizing subjects as Adam and Eve, Jonah and the whale, and how the sun managed to stand still, dealing with each in a manner that is incisive, tactful, and occasionally humorous. The book is an excellent example of popularization achieved without loss of scientific reliability.

Problems of Authority. Edited by John M. Todd. Helicon. \$5.95. Like the Bible, authority in the Church has been a problem for many. The papers given at Bec in 1961 are not of uniform length or quality but they introduce many facets of a very wide problem. Fransen on the Councils and Congar on historical development are tremendous; and when one adds the papers on the authority of Scripture and tradition, on conscience, on the indwelling Word, and related topics, the result is a stimulating and provocative experience.

Divine Grace and Man. By Peter Fransen, S.J. Desclee Company. \$2.25. Growing out of a series of lectures to lay people, this little book is a refreshing explanation of grace as a life (in us) and a love (of God for us) that makes up in one hundred seventeen pages for much of the confusion of centuries of argument. Eschewing a technical approach, the

author is concerned more with the psychology of grace and its interaction with external realities than with scholastic distinctions. His short discussions of the relation between grace and freedom, between grace and morality, and between the interior life and the world are gems of light and brevity. This is a subject of which most lay people are woefully ignorant, but one which is a prerequisite for any serious discussion of spiritual matters. Fransen's informal book is an ideal place to begin.

Mystics of Our Times. By Hilda Graef. Hanover House. \$4.50. Most of us tend to think of mystics as exotic and even suspect people who popped up now and again during the Dark Ages. Miss Graef shows, on the contrary, that they are often energetic and purposeful people who live in our midst. The well-known and the little-known are among her ten subjects, and in each case she makes it abundantly clear that one finds God not in an unreal world sought as an escape, but in the hard realities of one's time and place.

Introduction to Spirituality. By Louis Bouyer. Desclee. \$5.75. The only thing prosaic about this book is its title. Under the guise of a "manual," Father Bouyer presents an enlightening analysis of various forms of spiritual life through the ages, a denunciation of the attempts that have been made to divide it into segments designed for laymen and/or monks, and a really inspiring call to return to the fundamentals of spirituality: the Word of God received by faith and given to us through the liturgy. In his emphasis on the cross, on Christ, and on the ever-vivifying spirit present in the Church, he is on the solid ground that will make this work a classic.

SISTER MARIS STELLA

The Council, Reform and Reunion. By Hans Küng. Sheed and Ward. \$3.95. This is the book everyone has read, or ought to be reading, if he wishes to grasp the implications of the Ecumenical Council. Father Küng has given a brief account of the Reformation, the schism resulting from it, and the vast work that would

have to precede a genuine reunion of Christendom. He is careful, also, to point to encouraging signs such as the liturgical revival, the renewed interest in scriptural studies and the awareness of social problems on the part of great modern popes—all aspects of the quiet but steady renewal within the Church "not only between Leo X and Leo XIII but between Leo XIII and John XXIII."

The Judgment of the Sea. By Gertrude Von LeFort. Regnery. \$5.00. The four short novels in this volume explore some of the ways by which

women realize their womanhood. Miss LeFort chooses to write what might be read as romantic legends. As such they would be pleasurable reading, but one would miss the depth and subtlety with which contemporary spiritual and moral problems are projected on the screen of a remote past. These stories, by the author of *Hymns to the Church*, are worth more attention than they appear to have received.

Never the Golden City. By Sister Mary Jean Dorcy, O.P. Sheed and Ward. \$3.95. Sister Mary Jean has

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written an account of an unbelievable chase through deserts, canyons, and mountain villages in New Mexico on the trail of people, hidden shrines, and buried treasure—all, apparently, the inventions of a handyman with a talent for concocting tall stories and a genius for convincing others of his veracity. Sister Mary Jean was convinced, and, as the possessor of a gift for seeing an amusing world in a grain of legend, she was able to turn Jaime's brain-children, and the ridiculous situations in which she found herself because of them, into a richly funny book.

Never No More. By Maura Laverty. Templegate. \$3.95. First published during the war this recently reissued novel is now receiving the attention it deserves. It is a relief to read a book by an author who loves her characters and the scenes through which they move—the old houses, the country lanes, the tinkers' wagons, the straggly village streets, and the land which holds them. No one could have been better suited to see Delia through the difficult stage of growing up in an uneasy family situation than Gran, who is a wonderful combination of common sense, tolerance, love, and good humor. Delia is a believable child, far from perfection. When you have finished the story you ask for more, as Brendan Behan did: "... more Maura Laverty, more Gran, more Mollie Nolans, more wakes, more weddings."

Lord of the Flies. By William Golding. Coward-McCann. \$5. It has been said that one of the needs of our time is to establish the fact of the decline of modern man, who has, according to R. M. Weaver, "about squandered his estate." If this is what Mr. Golding intended, he has succeeded so far as his medium permits, and he has done it with terrifying emphasis. When the sensitive Simon says of the boys' fear, "What I mean is ... maybe it's only us," he has given a key to the problem. There was plenty to be feared in the boys, and if the reader hopes for help from the adults who finally arrive to take them off the lost island, he may be disappointed.

O Ye Jigs and Juleps. By Virginia Cary Hudson. Illustrated by Karla Kuskin. Macmillan. \$2.50. This book,

written by a child at the turn of the century, is pure amusement with a bit of wry wisdom thrown in. There are comments on everything from the sacraments to the neighbors. The pictures are delightful. It belongs on the Christmas list.

LEO R. WARD

The Unfinished Reformation. By Hans Asmussen, Max Lackmann and others. Fides. \$4.95. In this book six Lutheran clergymen speak within and for the movement called *Samm lung*, a German Lutheran gathering or get-together, to inquire into great theological and historical questions. For one thing, they want to determine how fair or unfair are the readings by Catholics or Lutherans or anyone of any persuasion on the Reformation and on the Church. Because the book also contains the famous Seven Circular Letters of 1954-57 on the present position of the Church, anyone interested in the union of the churches or in Christianity will want to read it.

In My Disc of Gold. Itinerary to Christ of William Congdon. Reynal. \$10. Mr. Congdon is an American painter who did much spiritual and physical wandering under the conviction that he could only find himself through travel. Maritain's words kept giving him trouble: "If some moral vice does not chain his heart to dullness, the artist will recognize Love and Beauty." In spite of much resistance, Congdon surrendered at last, and this book is the record of his sinning, suffering and repentance, together with a sheaf of reproductions of the paintings the odyssey inspired.

The Philosopher and Theology. By Etienne Gilson. Random House. \$3.75. When Gilson speaks or writes, people listen, so great a teacher is he. It is fortunate that his style is incomparable since his thesis—that there is a Christian philosophy and a Christian learning—is still opposed, on the one hand by secularists who hold that there is no learning in theology, and on the other by Christians who maintain that there is no Christian philosophy or sociology, no Christian learning at all, outside theology. In

his quasi-autobiographical work, Gilson still finds the latter party the more curious and the less legitimate. "I have never conceived the possibility of a split conscience, divided between faith and philosophy."

Letters from a Traveller. By Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Harper and Row. \$4. Père Teilhard is going to be discussed for many years, and persons yet unborn will in their day be coping with the implications of his thought. The *Letters* are a great help and pleasure now, and will continue to be. It is something to try to understand any man; exceptional indeed was the man who said that during every moment of his life the world had been taking on light and fire "until it has come to envelop me in one mass of luminosity, glowing from within."

The Supreme Court on Church and State. Edited by Joseph Tussmann. Oxford. \$1.95. With the church, state and school question so urgent, it is good to have this book of readings. Dr. Tussmann, while not completely covering the subject, has put a great deal of relevant material into this collection.

CRITICS

Thomas F. Curley, a New York novelist and critic and a regular contributor to these pages, is the author of the recently published *It's A Wise Child*.

Philip Deasy, a frequent contributor of articles and reviews, is a member of the English faculty at St. Peter's College, New Jersey.

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Father Leo R. Ward, C.S.C., a member of the faculty of the University of Notre Dame, is the author of many books, including the recently published *God and World Order*.

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**in the December issue
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"A Baptist Intellectual's View of Catholicism"

In the past few years Protestants have suddenly begun to rediscover Catholicism. There are several reasons for this, but the major one is that Catholics are simply more noticeable. The Roman Church must re-examine some cherished orthodoxies before much communication with other Christians can occur . . . and before it can offer real solace to a secular world "for which not only God is dead but in which His memory seems almost forgotten." By Harvey Cox.

Other articles in the December Harper's: "New Findings on the Origin of Races," by Carleton S. Coon; "David Dubinsky: Why His Throne Is Wobbling," by Paul Jacobs; "The Real Sins of the Press," by Lester Markel; "Kennedy's Working Staff," by Joseph Kraft; "West Point: Ancient Incubator for a New Breed," by David Boroff; plus Harper's regular departments and columns.

HARPER'S

An Immensely Active Daily Life

Newman: The Pillar of the Cloud.
By Meriol Trevor. Doubleday. \$7.95.

by Martin J. Svaglic

THE appearance of the first half of the most ambitious biography of John Henry Newman since Wilfrid Ward's in 1912 is an event of some cultural significance. It is the work of a lady named Meriol Trevor, "whose historical novels have won her acclaim in England," we are told on the dust jacket, and who has written what we are further assured is certain to be the "definitive" study of Newman's life.

Both claims of the publisher seem rather excessive, however, as Miss Trevor is not a very well-known novelist in England, at least under that name; and her biography pays so much less attention to Newman's chief ideas than to his everyday life as to offer a less satisfactory account of the really significant Newman than Wilfrid Ward's.

Nevertheless, it should be recognized that Ward's biography, which has proved a seminal work in the lives of so many readers in the last fifty years, has long been regarded with mixed feelings at the Birmingham Oratory, perhaps for the reason indicated by the present Superior, Father Charles Stephen Dessain, in his Introduction to the great new edition of Newman's letters. Granting that Ward's book is in many ways "masterly and admirable," Fr. Dessain goes on to say: "Wilfrid Ward seemed too inclined to set up as Newman's *judge* when writing the *life*, which he treated as a tragic drama, 'the tragedy of the Church in the Nineteenth Century.' It was felt that a simpler approach, with the reader allowed to interpret more for himself, would have been preferable."

Whatever may be said in Miss Trevor's favor, however, and there is a great deal, I do not suppose anyone can maintain that she has allowed the reader to judge more for himself. If Newman confesses, "I have not so much opportunity of displaying pride, yet I am very proud," she is always at hand to assure us

that he "could not have been so very proud, since he noticed thus every stirring of vanity." What makes her monitorial presence bearable, however, and even, after one has grown accustomed to it, rather welcome, is a growing realization that Miss Trevor is a lady who has thought deeply about some of the most important problems in life; that she has acute insights into human nature; and that most of the time an informed student of Newman will feel inclined to agree with her.

Miss Trevor tells us that because Fergal McGrath's *Newman's University* covers its ground so well, she has treated the Catholic University in Ireland "very summarily, concentrating on Newman's personal activities." This is a principle she appears to have followed throughout the volume. In any event, if you want to learn in detail about the Tractarian Movement—its works, its personalities, and its possible European antecedents—you will still have to rely heavily on Dean Church and Christopher Dawson; if about Oxford itself and Newman's studies, on Dwight Culler; if about certain aspects of the Newman family, on Maisie Ward and Sean O'Faolain.

Hers is a method which results in a biography of rather surprising proportions: e.g., some 360 pages for Newman's story from 1801 to 1845 as against almost 300 for the less significant eight years till 1853. The advantage of the method is that it permits the author to concentrate on and illumine aspects of Newman's life such as his work in organizing the Oratory, to whose Fathers her book is dedicated, that have not hitherto been stressed.

Miss Trevor has mastered a great amount of primary source material in the Oratory archives. Among the distinctive aspects of this first volume are an assessment of Hurrell Froude's influence that tends to counterbalance Dawson's stress on Froude's pivotal role; the fullest treatment available of Newman's attitude toward marriage and virginity; a vivid account of Newman's illness in Sicily, regarded as the purga-

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tion of a tendency to stress party or self more than the will of God. Newman "confessed the worst," says Miss Trevor, "and set about living in a new way: one step at a time, God leading, he submissive to experience." Hence "Lead, Kindly Light," or as Newman called it, "The Pillar of the Cloud," which is presumably the "idea," in Newman's sense, of the volume, though it does not always clearly inform all the material.

Miss Trevor sheds some light on Newman's later relations with Hampden and Arnold; gives us the best portrait we have of Newman's devoted friend and disciple, Maria Giberne (far more balanced than O'Faolain's); cites in fresh detail the Bishop's charges against Tract Ninety and other extraordinarily virulent attacks on Newman; and provides rewarding accounts of Newman's life at Littlemore, of his seeing the Oratory through a troubled infancy, and of his prolonged ordeal during the suit for libel brought by the profligate ex-Dominican Achilli, whose character Newman had exposed in *The Present Position of Catholics in England*.

It is not, obviously, that she has a different story to tell or special insights into Newman's thought that make Miss Trevor's book so worthwhile; it is rather that she offers so much new and revealing detail on Newman's immensely active daily life, sometimes touching, as in his description of his closest early friend, the dying Bowden, being carried upstairs at night: "He made me come and see what he called his 'procession'—his wife first with the candle, then he in the arms of two men. While going up, he turned about his head, to be sure I was looking. . . . One forgets past feelings, else I would say that I never had pain like the present"; now half comic, half pathetic, as in his 1844 correspondence with the distracted Miss Holmes, who saw in Newman a father image. "I love you better than all the world together," she wrote, "a million times better than you love me"—only to be given by Newman, along with kindly advice, some such deflating assurance as that "I am not conscious of any elation at the fervency of your expressions."

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What emerges from all Miss Trevor's research is a portrait of Newman utterly different from the neurotic and all but overtly homosexual figure of Geoffrey Faber's rather influential *Oxford Apostles*, an amusing and often informative Freudian study written with verve and some insight but fundamentally superficial and misleading. It is the balance and humanity of Newman's Christian character that Miss Trevor makes clear, and such traits are nowhere more evident than in a chapter called "The Idea of Virginity," obviously written with the Freudians in mind.

Newman never depreciates marriage or love between the sexes, as she points out. Indeed he remarked in an unpublished sermon: "To make a single life its own end, to adopt it simply and solely for its own sake, I do not know whether such a state is more melancholy or more unamiable, melancholy from its unrequited desolateness . . . and unamiable from the pride and self-esteem on which it is based."

It is an irony of a skeptical age like our own that a highly theoretical and *a priori* book like Faber's does not especially suffer in the academic world from the charge of "special pleading"; whereas one like Miss Trevor's, with immensely more evidence behind it, probably will suffer.

Yet of the two, the former is far the more guilty. The charge can with some justice be brought against Miss Trevor, however.

She is so obviously partisan that most of Newman's critics or adversaries get very short shrift and appear two-dimensional beside the well-rounded figure of Newman. Nor does she ever treat with the requisite insight and detachment such complex questions as Newman's pride and sensitivity, the charge of sophistry brought against him on occasion even by some of his admirers, or what might be called the feminine side of his nature. Newman himself can frankly refer to Oratory trials which "tore off" his "morbidly sensitive skin," but Miss Trevor seems to recognize only his "supposed sensitivity," which is also a phrase of Newman's.

For these and some other reason which I do not have the space to enter into here, I am inclined to doubt that *Newman: the Pillar of the Cloud* will come to be considered a definitive biography, if there could ever be such a thing of a controversial figure like Newman. But it is without question a very rewarding study that puts us permanently in Miss Trevor's debt.

Anxiety and Paranoia

Stern. By Bruce Jay Friedman
Simon and Schuster. \$3.95.

by Nat Hentoff

AS statistics of mental illness spiral the remarkable fact is not that severe neuroses are so pervasive, but rather that more among us do not become actually insane. To be endured is not only the psychopathology of power politics (peace through terror) but also the increased absurdity of the work most of us do—a daily disuse of most of our capacity that cannot help but squash and distort our "private" energies as well.

In this situation, the majority survive by hiding inside themselves. Outwardly adjusted and reasonably amiable, inwardly they are a jumble of floating fears, exacerbated grievances, and a persistent sense of gnawing, though seldom precise, dissatisfaction. With the usual exceptions of those few whose lives are meaningfully committed and therefore self-satisfying, our common internal condition is a blend of chronic anxiety and mild paranoia ("They"—in the office, in bed, or in Russia—are always out to trip us up.)

In his first novel, Bruce Jay Friedman has distilled these central symptoms of our time into the experience of Stern, a Jewish husband and father in his thirties. The circumstances which begin the story—a splattering act of anti-Semitism against Stern's wife and child just after the family has moved into a strange suburb—will, of course, make the novel's gradual excavation of Stern's layers of fear acutely relevant to Jewish readers. All but the most diligently

simulated of Reform and disaffiliated Jews are still aware of being insiders, to a smaller or larger extent, in a country in which "brotherhood" usually ceases after office hours. In my own case, although I have never seen a pogrom and have lived for thirty-seven years with only one beating for my Jewishness, the sudden announcement of a nationwide pogrom would somehow not be a total surprise. Certainly, this constant expectation of immolation because of lineage is irrational here and now, but it is shared by many more American Jews than will admit it—to others or to themselves.

Stern, however, is not only about Jews. It transcends that kind of "problem" novel by making its universal bring more and more to the surface the tangled tensions and fragmented self-delusions of the citizenry at large. Friedman, moreover, in a major stylistic achievement, fuses achingly realistic detail with enflamed fantasies to make Stern loomingly alive. Stern has a presence, almost a palpability of flesh and gait, that is exceedingly

rare in current fiction and that ultimately makes Stern's struggle to stay in contact with reality, any kind of reality, a startlingly personal self-exposure while also reflecting, as I have already noted, our common condition.

Stern is Everyman, who wonders whether he will spend all his life in a maze; and he is also only Stern, whom we leave with his ulcer temporarily at rest and holding his wife and child "a fraction longer than he'd intended."

The plot is both simple and bottomless. Stern's brooding and fantasizing about the insult to his family gradually disintegrates his barriers of self-protection against boss, strangers, his family, and ultimately, himself. The poisons of clenched rage, fear and self-contempt bring forth the ulcer. Stern is "cured" in a Home whose rotting patients are undressed by Friedman with a tartly affecting combination of compassion and gothic wonder at how misshapen a human being can become and still twist himself into yet another posture of survival.

Stern returns home, finally confronts the anti-Semite who started his ulcer blooming, and fails in his rite of exorcism by fists. He has been split into too many pieces for too long a time, and it is very doubtful that all the king's horses and all the king's men could possibly put him together again.

The novel does not so much end, as flow into "real life." It is entirely conceivable that some who read this book will look into the mirror and see Stern. Friedman, incidentally, offers neither solution nor catharsis. But he does take some of the bandages off our wounds.

Can It Happen?

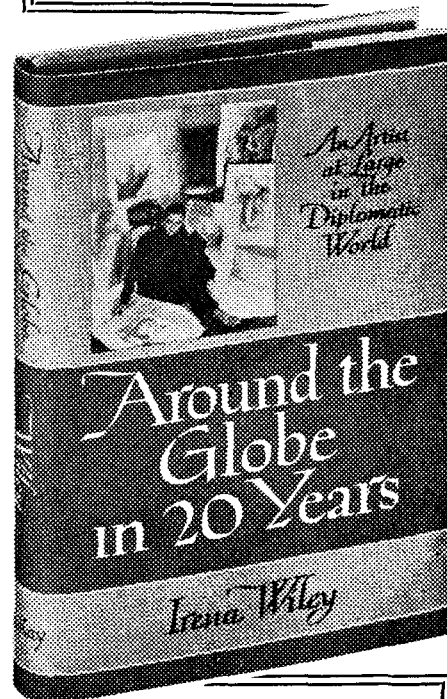
Fail-Safe. By Eugene Burdick and Harvey Wheeler. McGraw-Hill. \$4.95.

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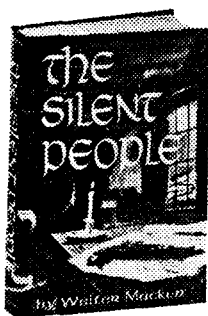
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long after all attending personnel are dead. Deeply buried electronic devices, clicking away in the darkness will open the silos of death and disgorge their rockets. Megadeaths, overkill, the love bomb, fail-safe, escalation and counter-escalation. Fail-safe should have a reassuring ring to it. It is a device carried by nuclear bombers to be activated only at the outbreak of war and then only by Presidential order. But once fail-safe says "Go!" all other orders must be disregarded as possible ruses of the enemy. Even the President cannot contradict it. It would after all be very easy, as Burdick and Wheeler (and a number of night-club comedians) have pointed out, to imitate "that regional accent" and turn the planes back. This is the story of what might happen if fail-safe failed.

Fail-Safe is a wonderfully exciting action novel. I have a device for measuring suspense more accurate than any electronic gadget. If my palms sweat, I know I am holding Book of the Month Club material. With *Fail-Safe* the jacket dye began to come off and trickle down to my

elbows. Fail-safe fails. The crew of the SAC bomber opens its secret instructions. They are essentially very simple: Bomb Moscow. The span of the novel is the mere minutes of waiting until the holocaust begins. It is the story of the desperate efforts by Washington and Moscow (which we have alerted) to ward off the inevitable.

The book started out as a short story in *Dissent* a few years ago and has been nicely fleshed out into what we would have regarded as far-out science fiction not too long ago. It is already well up on the best-seller lists, and with good reason (despite the clichés and the stylistic abrasiveness). It's a fine whoop-de-do of a story.

But the book, the authors say, has a serious intent—to point up the dangerous possibilities of an accidental war. With the possibilities of a deliberate war to engage our worry-time, it seems rather much to ask us to fret about the possibilities of an accidental one. To the extent that I took the novel seriously I was a little disturbed, quixotically perhaps, by a

converse problem. What if by a thinkable chance we should actually want to go to war? Would all those complicated electronic machines let us? It just may be that we will be spared disaster by a recalcitrant transistor.

I found another aspect of the book worth worrying about—seriously. At C. Wright Mills' knee a few years ago, I learned that the U. S. military was made up of bloodthirsty monsters. *Fail-Safe*—it does have a ring of authenticity—makes all those sinister generals out to be about as bell gerent as a WAC volley-ball team. There are, in fact, only two sinister military types in the book and neither is a general. Both, of course, are American, bearing out something of Professor Mills' thesis. One of these rats balks at killing American personnel to show the Russians we are good joes and don't mean nobody no harm except possibly ourselves. This guy comes from a bad family background. His parents drink. The other fascist rat has the audacity to suggest that we might possibly win a war with Russia! He, of course, is sexually maladjusted. He "never in his life distinguished between sex and love." That's on page 125 in case you want to verify the quotation.

The heroes of the novel are Khrushchev and our lanky young President with the regional accent. The two of them have long soul-searching chats over their especially set-up phone system. When Khrushchev gets around to quoting Thomas à Kempis you'll just want to cry. The climax of the book—and I really can't keep myself from revealing it—is the President's decision to wipe out New York City to reassure Khrushchev that we're really not half so bad when you get to know us. I had only one quibble: Why not Washington, D.C.? That way we might come out ahead.

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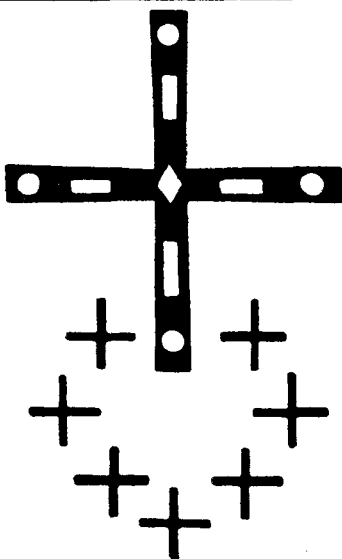
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ART

California Artists

MOVIE PEOPLE and tennis players flourish in the California climate, and now the right to include artists has been put forward. The exhibit entitled *Fifty California Artists*, at the Whitney Museum until December 2, will later travel to Minneapolis, Buffalo and Des Moines to give this country a wide opportunity to weigh the merits of the case.

On the whole this seems to be a show that is too anxious to catalogue variety at the expense of value: it seems to want to prove that California nurtures all kinds of artists rather than to prove how good some of her artists are. It establishes that California has its action painters and assemblage artists and geometric-abstract artists and "realists" as well as the well-known and generally admired new figure painters. But the only result is to leave the new figure painters way out ahead, with one or two interesting exceptions which may, or may not, justify the comprehensive character of the selection. The interesting exceptions would have been included in an exhibit based only on the best of what is being produced in California, without any effort to achieve variety.

Be that as it may, it was a surprise and a pleasure to see a group of first-rate geometric-abstract artists from California: Lorser Feitelson, whose bold clear-cut forms recall Ellsworth Kelly, the serene airy compositions of Helen Lundberg (his wife, as it happens) and the crisp, lively patterns of Karl Benjamin. This was the only category, as such, that came as a surprising pleasure. Yet William Wiley, who paints semi-abstract forms, sometimes in a rich traditional technique reminiscent of Rembrandt lit up à la Georges de la Tour—at least in two out of three paintings included here—may be an "original." He constituted the other exception to what seemed the rule of variety pure and simple.

This young painter's work seems to have evolved suddenly from an undistinguished type of Rivera-like expressionism to a robust and impres-

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sive conception of painting. His *Folklore*, for instance, is a hallucinatory work. And it is interesting to note that Wiley's present direction seems to be the opposite of those new figure painters who easily dominate this exhibit and the field of California painting generally: in the new figure painters the shape of fairly traditional forms emerge from abstract techniques while in these paintings of Wiley's, abstract forms are illuminated by traditional technique.

The benevolence of the California climate is perhaps the source of the atmosphere of the new figure painting from that state—the conception of the figure as part of its surroundings, enveloped in air and space. Elmer Bischoff's *Three Bathers*, with its baroque women sprawled in the curves of the dunes, is a strong example of this affinity of human forms to their environment. Diebenkorn's more static visions—fixed through a window frame, for instance—and Oliveira's figures conjured out of a luminous fog, are deeply satisfying and eloquent examples of this quality.

For my part, I only wish there had been more in this show! Why was Paul Wonner not included? William Brice, who might be considered one of the new figure painters from California, and who is represented (*Pomegranates* is particularly admirable) is an expressionist who shares this ambient disposition to a certain extent, but with a more dramatic focus.

In a recent article in *Encounter* Aldous Huxley, in speaking of *Unpainted Landscapes*, says that "A painting is a device that makes it possible for the spectator to see through the artist's eyes." To a large extent a painter lives more through his eyes than other men, thinks and feels through his eyes—and according to his ability, transfers his vision through painting. Because of this, in one way or another, environment is an important factor in the work of any painter, an environment transfigured and informed by his sensibility. It seems to me that in a very real way, if not as yet in a "great" way, a good number of these painters from California achieve this.

Similarly, Franz Kline's bold dy-

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 emic to the speed and shape of life
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 ing important occasions for Ameri-
 cans to look through these painters'
 eyes and recognize mysteries and
 meanings rooted in the atmosphere
 of their parts of our country, too.

The point seems to be not so much
 that California is an exceptional fos-
 ter-mother for artists as that a certain
 recognizable quality, reflecting the
 environment of that state, emanates
 from their painting. Part of the mys-
 tery and meaning of the landscape,
 of the light and air and the general
 disposition of forms, can be found in
 Helen Lundeborg's airfield-like ab-
 stractions or in Bischoff's billowy fe-
 males in their natural settings. There
 is a family resemblance that relates
 the work of artists who are at differ-
 ent poles in intention and technique.
 The dialogue between the artist and
 his world, which nourishes art limit-
 lessly, is not more fruitful because it
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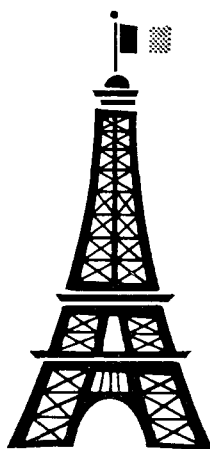
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